

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: AGAPITO BAKIANO, retired plantation worker

Agapito Bakiano, Visayan, was born in 1902 in Argao, Cebu, one of three children of Marciano and Barbara Bakiano.

He immigrated to Hawaii in December, 1920 and worked at Kalai on Koloa Plantation until the strike in 1924. As a "new man," Mr. Bakiano reluctantly took part in the strike and was arrested after the Hanapepe incident. He was released from jail when he accepted the opportunity to go back to work at Hanamaulu plantation where he stayed until retirement in 1967.

Mr. Bakiano and his wife, who died in 1978, raised four children. He is a Catholic and enjoys raising fighting chickens and gardening in Hanamaulu.

Tape No. 5-29-2-78 TR1 and TR2

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Agapito Bakiano (AB)

November 2, 1978

Hanamaulu, Kauai

BY: Ed Gerlock (EG) and Chad Taniguchi (CT)

CT: This is an interview with Mr. Agapito Bakiano, and Ed Gerlock, at Mr. Bakiano's home in Hanamaulu. And today is November 2, 1978.

EG: Manong, how is it that you heard there in the Philippines, that there was work to be had here in Hawaii?

AB: There in Cebu, there was an office.

EG: What kind of an office?

AB: An office that represented the plantations here in Hawaii. They were going around asking workers if they would like to come here to Hawaii. And then there was also this woman that I was going with at that time. And she was also willing to come here to Hawaii. So we were married there on the plantation in Cebu.

EG: Where were you born?

AB: I was born in Argao, a town in Cebu.

EG: What was your birthdate?

AB: I really don't remember when my birthday was.

EG: Well, what year was it?

AB: It was 1902.

EG: When you were still there in Argao, what was the way of making a living of your family?

AB: Ah, they were just poor people.

EG: Well, what was your work there?

AB: Well, it was on the land. We were just planting corn there on the land, because that's the food of the poor people.

EG: How many were you altogether in your family?

AB: We were only three children in the family; two boys and a girl.

EG: We were talking about those agents who were going around encouraging people to come here to Hawaii to work. What was their way of convincing people?

AB: They went around. There were quite a few of these agents who went around, and I think maybe that they had some kind of an allowance or some kind of percentage that was given to them for everybody that they convinced to come here to Hawaii. Oh, they told us even ahead of time that if you go to Hawaii, you'll receive \$1 a day. That's what the salary is. So they picked me up and I went, because life was hard there. I was accepted. We were many.

EG: How many were you?

AB: I don't know. But we were a lot.

EG: So you signed some kind of contract. For how long was that?

AB: I don't know, but we did; we signed some kind of a contract. We signed it right there in Cebu.

EG: So you rode on a boat. Where did that go from?

AB: It went from Cebu and up to Manila.

EG: So the boat, when it arrived Manila, then it came right here to Honolulu?

AB: No, we went first to Shanghai. No, it was Hong Kong. We stopped in Hong Kong because they were going to paint the ship. We were one week there, in Hong Kong.

EG: Then from Hong Kong?

AB: We went to Shanghai.

EG: So you had a chance to go around Shanghai?

AB: No, we couldn't get off the ship. We just stayed on board ship. And anyway it was very cold.

EG: What month was that?

AB: It was December.

EG: What year was that?

AB: It was December of 1920.

EG: Then from Shanghai?

AB: We went straight to Honolulu.

EG: So when you arrived in Honolulu were you assigned to Kauai right away?

AB: No, we had to wait around. They were looking around to find out what plantations were lacking laborers. So we were two weeks there in Honolulu.

EG: So while you were there for the two weeks, where were you living? On board ship?

AB: No, with the office. They had some kind of a place there where the sakadas could stay. Yeah, there at Immigration.

So after two weeks, we were sent here to Kauai.

EG: What plantation?

AB: Koloa. That's the first place where I was sent.

EG: So when you arrived at the plantation what happened?

AB: We were given a house. Each house had two families in it. At that time there weren't Ilocanos yet. There was almost all Visayans. So there were two families in each house.

EG: You didn't have any problem with food?

AB: No, the food was okay.

EG: What was the first kind of work that you had to do?

AB: Kalai. But after I did that for about one, or I'm not sure, two weeks, then I became a line boy. I was counting the lines. That kind of work required that you started work very early in the morning. And so when you be out there counting, then you get all wet.

EG: What are these lines that you're talking about?

AB: The lines for sugar.

EG: How come you were all wet?

AB: It's because of the dew that was on the ground.

EG: You mean because it was so early in the morning?

AB: Yeah, that's right.

[EG: I really don't understand this system but it seems like he'd go to work very early in the morning, and he would count the lines of sugar. And somehow, they were numbered and so when the workers would come to work, they would be given a number so that they'd know where they were assigned that particular day.]

EG: Manong, can you tell me how much was your salary at that time?

AB: Well, if you work for 23 days, then you were given an extra bonus of \$1 and 10 sentabos [\$1.10]. But outside of that, if you didn't work 23 days in one month, then you would only get \$1 per day.

EG: Did you get any kind of privilege that when you finished working there for three years, you could ride back to the Philippines free?

AB: I never went home.

EG: Oh yeah. But when you signed the contract, was that not included, that you could go back after three years?

AB: Yes, it was.

EG: But when you left Argao, Cebu, in order to come to Hawaii, was that not your intention, that you would go to Hawaii for a certain period of time, but that you would come back to the Philippines? Were you thinking that, at that time?

AB: Yes, yes, for sure that's what I was thinking. Yes, because I'm a Filipino. What else would I do? But I never did go back. My wife did go back, but she has since died in an accident [in 1978].

EG: So you have never gone back to the Philippines?

AB: No, I haven't. But my wife went back twice. But she never went back free. She had to pay each time.

EG: How is it that you never went back, that according to you, the contract said that if you worked for three years, you could go back free, back to the Philippines. How is it that you never went back?

AB: You know, I never understood that. I didn't know that you could go back free. But there were others that said that if you worked for three years that you could go back. But I really don't know about that.

EG: When you left from the Philippines to come here, what did you bring with you? A kind of a trunk?

AB: Yeah, I bought a trunk there in Cebu before I left. But it was just a cheap thing, but I needed something to carry my things in. The whole thing cost three pesos. Actually, it wasn't a trunk; it was more like a suitcase.

EG: Well, what did you have inside of there?

AB: Oh, just the clothes.

EG: You never took along any souvenirs or holy pictures, or something like that?

AB: No.

EG: Were you given anything by the company?

AB: Yes, we were given clothes.

EG: And how about money?

AB: Yes, we were given \$10. And because I was married, it was \$20, at that time.

EG: You didn't have any children?

AB: No. All my children were born here in Hawaii.

EG: How about your situation on the plantation? Was everything all right? The house, the food, the clothes?

AB: Yeah, it was okay.

EG: Did you ever hear the name of Pablo Manlapit?

AB: Oh yeah, I heard it, but I never saw him.

EG: At any time, even from the beginning up until now, you've never seen him?

AB: No, I've never seen him.

EG: Well, what did you hear about him?

AB: The strikers came to us and told us that they were out on strike. I myself, I didn't even know what a strike was. So I went along with them because I was afraid.

EG: Why were you afraid?

AB: I was afraid because something could really happen to you, if you didn't join in the strike.

EG: Did they actually say that?

AB: Yes, they did.

EG: That's really what they said? They said that verbally?

AB: It wasn't the other people who said that. It was the strikers themselves who said that to us.

EG: So therefore, you just joined the strike?

AB: Yeah, that's right. I just joined.

EG: Because of fear?

AB: Yeah, that's right. Because of fear. I wasn't very long here in Hawaii, at that time. And especially because a lot of my neighbors were Ilocanos, and they didn't understand it very much. And these were Visayans who were saying it. So I just went along with them.

EG: What did you think about the strike? Did you think that it had the possibilities of being successful?

AB: I really didn't know. But they were talking about getting a better salary, and there was a large number of people who were going along with it. So I just went with them also. That's what they were talking about, that they would raise the salary from \$1 to \$2 a day. That's what they promised.

EG: So how did you feel about the \$2 for one day?

AB: Well, of course I went along with it. I wanted \$2 a day also. After all, we were two in our family, at that time. So, the system was, if you agreed to go along with the strike, what you did is you took your things and brought them out to the road. And a truck would come along and pick up those things for you, and take them to the strike camp.

EG: Where did the truck come from?

AB: Well, they had a truck of their own.

EG: Who owned the truck?

AB: I don't know.

EG: You also rode on the truck?

AB: Yeah, that's right. I rode on it.

EG: Going to the strike camp?

AB: Yes.

EG: What year was that?

AB: That was 1924.

EG: What month?

- AB: Gee, it's hard for me to remember what month it was.
- EG: When you went into the strike camp, what happened then? What were you doing?
- AB: Oh, we didn't have anything to do. We were just kind of playing around. If you had a net, you could go fishing. So if you could also borrow equipment--like for fishing--then whatever fish you caught you could keep half and you give half to the owner of the equipment. Like the nets. Or you could sell some.
- EG: Did you yourself go fishing?
- AB: No, I didn't go myself. It was for those people who either had or could get nets.
- EG: How about yourself, what were you doing there?
- AB: Nothing. Just walking around.
- EG: For instance, how about cooking and washing and cleaning, and things like that; who was in charge of that?
- AB: Everybody had their own personal responsibility to take care of those things. Each group took care of their own needs.
- EG: In other words, there was not one kitchen for all the strikers?
- AB: No, there was not. In our strike camp, it was every group who took care of its own needs. But I did hear that there were other strike camps, where they had a common kitchen. Where they cooked for everybody. And as far as rice was concerned, strikers were given rice everyday.
- EG: Was there any one leader in the strike camp, who was telling people, trying to coordinate, like, "You sleep there," or, "This is where this is going to take place?"
- AB: In our place there was none. There was no leader like that. It was everybody kind of taking care of themselves. A big hall was where we were living. A Japanese hall.
- EG: Manong, there in Koloa, were there some Visayans who didn't join in the strike?
- AB: Yes, there were many.
- EG: Was there anything that happened to them because they didn't join the strike. For example, were they killed at night, did they die at night, something like that?
- AB: I don't know, but I don't think so.

EG: But that's what they said, if the Visayans didn't join the strike, they would be killed.

AB: No, but that was for the ones who struck. It didn't apply to those who didn't go on strike.

EG: At the time of the strike did you have any children?

AB: Yes, I had one. Yeah, I had a child. It was born in 1922, so at the time of the strike it was two years old.

EG: So, in other words, you were afraid also for your child. If you didn't strike, something might happen to the child?

AB: Yes, that's what it was. You know, if I didn't have a wife and I didn't have a child, I wouldn't have gone there, to the strike camp. But I had a child, and so I went to the strike camp.

EG: But your going to the strike camp, therefore, was not heartily done?

AB: Yeah, that's right. It wasn't.

EG: How do you look at the strike? Was it a good thing or not?

AB: As I look back on it now, I guess it was a good thing that we went on strike. Because eventually the salary did go up. It was only \$1 a day at that time, and it went up to \$2. And now the wages are very high. But on the other hand, also the things that you have to buy are very high. For example, in buying shoes. Before, you couldn't buy shoes. Now you buy shoes, but they're very expensive. So it's pretty much the same.

EG: So going back to the strike camp again, then there really was nothing for you to do there?

AB: No, there wasn't. My wife actually there inside of the strike camp, she was sometimes teaching dancing, balitaw. So if they wanted to learn how to do the balitaw, they would call my wife. And she also could make a little money that way. There were a lot of people who would give her money to teach that dance. And that money, we could use for our own benefit, to help ourselves.

EG: Why would they want to learn that dance?

AB: Well, it was for enjoyment. Balitaw was a very famous dance. Usually it was at night that she was teaching this kind of dance. And then there was a lot of strikers who were interested.

EG: Every night you had some kind of recreation like that? Like dances?

AB: Ah no, just once in a while. I would go around looking for people

who would like to learn how to do this balitaw. And if there were, then my wife would go there and teach them.

EG: How long were you there in the strike camp? How many years or months?

AB: I don't know. I forgot. It doesn't seem to me that it was very long, though. Maybe it was around four months. But it was over in a short time.

EG: How did it happen that it was finished? How did it end?

AB: Because there was a war. We were taken to the courthouse. We were all allowed out one by one, out of the strike camp. The police were also standing outside in a long line. It wasn't at the strike camp that we were allowed out one by one. It was there at the courthouse. After the war, we were put in the jail. And then, coming from the jail, the police were standing outside there in a long line. I was in jail for 15 days. Others who were involved in the strike were even sent back to the Philippines. So the police were lined up outside of the courthouse, and they sent the strikers out one by one. They were asking if they were there at the strike camp or not. [Actually, the question is, "Were they present?" And some police would answer "Yes, he was present," or "No, he was not there."] But when I came out, I was maybe about the last one. Then they said, "No, he wasn't there." When I was picked up, they separated myself from my wife.

EG: Where were you when the war actually took place?

AB: Well, when the police arrived the leader there in the hall...

EG: Who was that leader?

AB: His name was Insot. So they went out to the road, and the police went out there first. Insot said, "Okay, let's go, and whoever doesn't come along, I'm going to shoot 'em." So there were a lot of people in there and there were some who were looking for guns. When I arrived at the mango tree, that's when the shooting started. I was there in the banana patch. I hadn't come through the road yet, because it's a little bit of a distance between the banana patch and the road. And when I heard the shooting, I began to run. Why should I go over there to the road? I didn't even have a knife. I had nothing to defend myself with. There were others who had guns, but they only had two bullets. They were courageous, they were acting tough. Those who were acting tough were courageous, they're the ones who died. I'm a coward. Those who ran away, they didn't die.

EG: I know this is a very delicate question to ask you, but were there guns inside of the strike camp there?

AB: There were pistols around maybe, at that time. But I myself, I

never saw any pistols there in the strike camp. I never did see any pistols, but when the fighting started....I myself, I didn't see any pistols. But I guess when the fighting started, there must have been a few. Most of the others had only knives. Some even had stones.

EG: I don't understand how it is that you were inside the banana patch.

AB: Well, the way that it was, the first group that went went through the banana patch, and they were already on the road. And we were also going to follow, and we were still inside of the banana patch when the shooting started. I had no idea that there was going to be some kind of a fight out there on the road. Those that were in such a big hurry to get out on the road, they were killed.

EG: As far as you know, what's the beginnings of this fight?

AB: As far as I know, the plantation police at night--I'm not sure what time that was at night, but maybe around 10 o'clock--they went there to the strike camp where we were living....

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

AB: Police were out there on the road and they were passing among themselves boxes of bullets. It's a good thing that the fight didn't start that night, when the plantation police came to the camp. Because if we had fought that night, I'm sure we would have all died.

EG: Manong, I'm not sure I understand what you're saying. The plantation police were there at the strikers' camp at night? What were they doing there at night?

AB: I don't know. I don't know, but they did come there that night. I remember.

EG: So did they almost start fighting that night, there at the strikers' camp?

AB: No, no fight actually took place. But the strikers came out of the place where we were living, and the police were out there on the road.

EG: I didn't understand what you meant. Who was passing these boxes of bullets around? Was that the strikers?

AB: No, of course not. It was the police. The police were passing them around that night.

EG: Are you saying then that the police really had the intention of killing the strikers?

AB: Yeah, I think so. Because there's no fight that actually took place that night. But the next day....

EG: Isn't there something to do with two Ilocanos who were caught?

AB: Yeah, that's right. There were two Ilocanos who were caught, but I don't know what that had to do with it, myself. There were two men that they had caught, and were holding there, and they were not able to go home because they were being held. I think that's the beginning of the whole thing.

EG: In the banana patch, was there wire around it? Some kind of a wire fence?

AB: There on the side of the banana patch, going towards the ocean, there was wire. But up on the higher part of it, there was no wire. Or, I didn't see any anyway.

EG: You yourself, though, when you were going through the banana patch, when you walked into it, was there any wire there?

AB: No, there was no wire there. Just alongside the road. The side along the road had wire.

EG: What was your purpose of being in the banana patch in the first place anyway?

AB: The leader there, that we were calling Insot, he told us because we were the last ones, "You go through the banana patch, and we'll meet up ahead." We had just gotten into the banana patch and started going a little way, and boom, the shooting started. He came out of the banana patch and came out on to the road. When I came out on to the road, my wife was standing there. And also my child. There they were, they were standing outside, right alongside the road. Everybody ran. Even the women were running.

EG: What did you do then?

AB: There was an owner of a store. Pake. He said, "Hey, come on over here. He'll kill you, if the police see you."

"Why should they kill me? I'm not doing anything."

"Listen, even if you're not doing anything. If you're a striker, they're going to kill you."

So I went into his store, and I hid in there. I sat there for a long time, and nothing happened, so finally my wife said, "Let's go. We'll go to the hall. Why should we be afraid? We haven't done anything. They won't kill us." So we went to the hall.

When I entered the hall I was seen by the police. They got me right away, and they separated me from my wife. Those that they caught, they separated. And those that just happened to be there, they kept in a separate group also.

EG: How about your wife and your child? What happened with them?

AB: Oh, they were there also. I was separated from my wife and my child at that time.

EG: Then your wife and child were also caught?

AB: Sure they were, because they were also with me.

EG: Were they put in jail?

AB: No. They weren't taken along. They were put just back in the hall where we had been living before, during the strike. Then we were put in the truck and taken to the jail. The truck of the government took us.

EG: Were you many, inside of the jail?

AB: Yes. After three or four days--I'm not sure--then the sheriff came. He was looking around the jail. Each room was 10 boards wide. That was the size of the room. Ten boards [1 inch by 12 inches]. And there were 10 prisoners inside. When the sheriff looked inside, he said, "This isn't very good." So the next day they sent carpenters, and they were making other rooms.

They then made an announcement, "Those who like to stay in this room, just stay here. But those who would like to transfer, go out, step outside." I myself, I didn't want to transfer anywhere, because I liked the room that we were in very much. There was a breeze, at least air in that room. There was also no mosquitos in there.

Those who had the more serious charges against them, they were put in a separate room. It was also a room in which a lot of mosquitos were present. But for us who didn't have big sins, big charges against us, then it was closed and there weren't any mosquitos inside the room.

If you had to take a crap, then inside of the room we had a pail that we used for a toilet.

EG: So the first few days, it was sort of like sardines inside of a can?

AB: Yeah, that's the way it was all right.

EG: How about your food?

AB: It was okay. We were given dried fish and rice.

This pail that they were using for a crapper, that was inside of like a little bit of a place where you could go inside and shut the door. And if you went inside there, because they were crowded in the room, if you took a long time they start pounding on the door. You could hardly kind of time yourself and take a comfortable crap. It was pretty hard sometimes. Sometimes the other guy who was coming after you was in a big hurry. There was one guy in there, I think his name was Canata. It's hard for me to forget him. We were together inside of the cell. I said to him, "You know, you are really a dirty guy. You're really very nasty."

He said to me, "Why?"

I said, "I'm in there taking a crap, and there you are, pounding on the door. It's hard for me to take a respectable crap with you pounding on the door."

"Well, that was---I was ordered to do that."

EG: Who gave the order?

AB: Well, I just never asked him who did it.

EG: How many days did you say you were there?

AB: Fifteen.

EG: Was there any kind of an investigation now?

AB: There was no investigation in the jail itself. It was only later at the court.

EG: Are you saying then, that after 15 days inside the jail, then there was an investigation there at court?

AB: Yes.

EG: What was their system? How did they investigate?

AB: It wasn't a very formal kind of investigation. As a matter of fact, it was just something like---they made an announcement, "Whoever wants to go back to work on the plantation, there's a truck standing outside. You can ride now."

I myself, I would like to go back to the plantation if they would allow me to go back. I didn't want to go back to the same place that I came from, because the work was very hard there. Then the guard who was there at the plantation, Zacarias--he's dead now--he went back to the Philippines. He said, "If you like to go to Lihue, you can go there."

I said, "Yeah, that's where I'd like to go. I'd like to go to Lihue." So I wanted to go there, and so I went out and I rode on the truck.

EG: And that's all there was to it?

AB: Yeah, that's right.

EG: Was there no judge or any kind of lawyers who were asking...

AB: No, none. Nobody.

EG: How many of the people you were in jail with volunteered to go back to work on the plantation?

AB: I don't really know. Maybe it wasn't so many. The workers from Koloa, I'm not sure how many of them went back.

EG: So there was no court hearings or anything like that?

AB: No, there wasn't. So those who were caught by the police, they weren't given that chance. But those that were just kind of rounded up, those who were around the area like myself, they were given the possibility of just going back to work.

EG: Manong, when you were still inside of the jail there, do you know the names of some of your companions who were in the cell with you?

AB: I really don't know.

EG: While you were inside of the cell, did they take some of your companions away to be investigated, to be asked questions?

AB: Oh yeah, we were all taken. After the investigation was over, then you went back to your cell in the jail. The rest were taken back to their cell in the jail. But I myself, I didn't go back. I went to a new plantation.

EG: In other words, but there was some kind of an investigation for you?

AB: Yes, there was. What they did is they brought us out of the jail cell one by one. So when you came out, they would ask, "This one, was he there?"

And then the others would answer. At least one of the police would say, "Yes, he was there."

EG: Who is this who's saying, "Yes, he was there," or "He wasn't there?"

AB: It's the police saying that.

EG: Did the police know you? I mean all of you?

AB: Yes. Yes, they did. Because there were a lot of police there. When I came out and they were asking "was he there," there was one police there who said, "Yes, he was there." That's the police officer who had arrested me.

EG: Now, if he said that, that you had been there, why is it that they released you? In other words, if he said that you had been there, then that was some kind of an admission at least, that you were one of the strikers?

AB: Yes, that's right.

EG: Well, it's hard for me to understand why they let you go, if you were just like everybody else.

AB: That's all there was to it. The officer who said that was saying that I had been picked up there at the hall, and I was there with my wife and my child. And finally, there was a group of the plantation police who announced to a small group of us, "Whoever wants to go back to the plantation can go back right now."

I said, "I want to go back, but I don't want to go back to Koloa."

EG: So in other words, there were no other questions asked of you. Like why you had taken part in the strike, or who were your companions, or anything like that?

AB: No, there were no other questions.

EG: How about the rest of your companions? Was there any more of an investigation than that for them?

AB: I don't know. Because I went away right away.

EG: If you don't mind, I'd like to read a list of some names here, of people who were supposed to be heads of the strike. And see if you recognize any of them.

AB: Okay, go ahead.

EG: Isidro or Isidoro Baring?

AB: I don't know that one.

EG: Grande Basquez?

AB: Grande Basquez. Oh, I don't know that one.

EG: Mendoza?

AB: I don't know.

EG: Fausto Ceralde.

AB: I don't know that one.

EG: Evaristo Acebes.

AB: Evaristo Acebes. You know, there was someone named Evaristo. I'm not sure because I don't know the last name, if that's the same as the one you just read. That kind of a person in the Philippines is known as someone who has a good ability or a special charism. Special ability.

EG: He has some kind of a anting-anting [amulet]?

AB: Yeah, that's it. When he was finally released, there was a police there who was saying something like, "Hey, this kind of a guy is the kind we're going to shoot." You know, even if they shoot at him, the bullets don't have any effect. They don't even wound him. So the police took shots at him, and nothing happened. He had a special kind of power to prevent being hurt in any way. And nobody was able to hurt him.

EG: Did you personally see this thing?

AB: No, I didn't see it myself. But that was the story of the police.

EG: Panagan ["protection" against someone else's magical powers to prevent a person from being hexed].

(AB recognizes word)

AB: And you know, actually, we were in jail together. And so while we were just telling stories and talking to one another, I asked him, "Well, how many did you kill?"

He said, "None, I didn't kill anybody."

And so I said to him, "Well now, what's the use of having all of that special ability when you weren't able to kill anybody?"

"You know, it's not a good thing to kill people. If I kill anybody, then I myself will be killed. I'll lose the ability."

And I said, "Well, that's a good thing. It's good that you think that way." That's Evaristo. He was from....I forgot the place where he was from.

EG: How about the name Badong?

AB: No, I never heard that name.

EG: Lorenzo Alcorcorn?

AB: No, I don't know him.

EG: Lucio. No last name.

AB: No, I don't know him.

EG: Insot.

AB: That is the leader, there at the hall. That's the one who told us when the police came, "Let's go follow the police. And if anybody runs away, I'll kill 'em myself." He had a pistol. I've never heard since then, whether he's still alive or he's dead now.

EG: Was he Visayan?

AB: I don't really know, but he knew how to speak Visayan. Maybe he was an Ilongo. I'm not even sure if he was sent back to the Philippines. I just haven't heard his name anymore.

EG: But he was from the plantation?

AB: Yes.

EG: He was from your plantation?

AB: No, I don't really know which plantation he was from. He's not from ours.

EG: When the war started there in Hanapepe, what would be your estimate? How many police were there?

AB: I don't know. There were two truckloads full of them.

EG: In other words, you're saying there were plenty?

AB: Yes, there were. So I saw them. There was a lot of them. And I was asking them, "So all of you are police?"

And the guy said, "Yeah, that's right. We were paid to be that. We're salaried."

EG: When you were going through that line, and all the police were standing there and trying to recognize who was there and who wasn't, how many police would you estimate were there at that time?

AB: I don't really remember, but there were plenty also.

EG: Were those the ones who were there at Hanapepe, for the war?

AB: Maybe.

EG: Yeah, but take a wild guess. How many police were there? Would you say 100?

AB: No, no. It would never be that many.

EG: Fifty?

AB: Maybe. You know, that day in Hanapepe, there were other police who didn't have any uniform. They were even saying they weren't police.

EG: This offer, that if you wanted to go back to work, back to the plantation, you were willing to go then you could go, is that an offer made to you personally, or is that made to the whole group?

AB: I don't really know that. I didn't hear him say it to anybody else but to me.

EG: So what did you do? You just went to get your wife?

AB: Yeah, I went to get my wife and my child, and we moved to Lihue. We rode in a car. It was with one of the police. His name was Macarias. But he's dead now. He died there in Hanapepe, the time of the war. The Japanese war. He was killed by a Japanese.

EG: Manong, isn't it true that after the war, the Second World War, in 1946, there was still another strike? Were you also included in that strike in 1946?

AB: It's hard for me to remember. Is that was it was? A strike?

EG: How are you looking back on the strike now?

AB: The strike was a good thing, because we were able to get a higher salary. If there were no strike, then it would still be \$1 a day. Then you'd be under contract to do some of the work that we were doing then, and there would be people who wouldn't even be making \$1 a day. But now, the salaries are okay. Sometimes there were people who were making only 80 sentabos a day. If you were slow at doing kalai, then you'd be getting 70, 80 cents a day. There were some people who went up as high as \$2 a day, but there were 75, 80 cents for the slow workers.

EG: Who's going to make that judgment, how much your salary is?

AB: This is back to that thing about counting on the lines. Everything was counted.

END OF SIDE TWO

SIDE ONE: Tape No. 5-29-2-78 TR2

EG: Bosses or lunas before, were they haoles?

AB: They had different kinds of bosses. And sometimes there were even

Filipinos. The one that I had before, some were Portuguese. But there were no haoles who were lunas. There were different kind of lunas. But the ones who were just watching over the workers, they would either be Japanese or Portuguese. There were no Americans.

EG: But you say there were lunas who were Filipino.

AB: Most of them were Filipino.

EG: Were they good, the Filipinos who were lunas?

AB: Just like everybody else. Some were okay, and some were lousy. Before the strike, the lunas used to stand there, and they'd be shouting at you to keep moving. But after the strike they were a little more careful about things like that.

EG: Were there any lunas who were included in the strike?

AB: Oh, I don't know. I never met any. Probably not.

EG: How about food inside of the strike camp? Where did they get food from? Where did your food come from?

AB: We were given rice.

EG: Yeah, but where did it come from?

AB: I don't know. But we were given it regular. The leader there inside of the strike camp gave us rice. Sometimes he gave us sardines.

EG: Everyday?

AB: Yes, everyday. Everyday, really, we got food. Some of it came from the Japanese. It was good for other groups of strikers not in our camp. Because they would be able to do all their cooking together. For us, it was individual.

EG: How about the other groups of people; like for instance, the Ilocanos or the haoles? How did they look at your strike?

AB: Oh, I don't know.

EG: Were there any personal friends of yours who were killed during the shooting there in Hanapepe?

AB: No. I had no friends who were involved in that. I didn't even know the ones who were killed.

EG: There was none of your companions from the same plantation who were killed?

AB: No, there was no one I knew.

EG: How about when they were killed? Did they die right away?

AB: Yes, they did.

EG: Where did they bury them?

AB: I don't know where they buried them.

EG: There were quite a few, weren't they?

AB: Yes, there were 17. And the police--according to what they were saying--who were killed, were six. I don't know if that's just the story they were telling or it's really true. I didn't see it myself.

EG: From what you heard, though, who was the group who started the whole violence, the shooting? Was it the strikers or the police?

AB: I don't know. I was pretty far away. I was over there in the banana patch.

EG: Oh yeah. But it must seem like, after the whole thing was over and you were in jail, you must have talked about it.

AB: The companions who were with me inside of the jail, there was nobody that I knew personally, so we didn't really talk about it.

EG: Who were your companions there in the jail?

AB: I didn't know any of them.

EG: How about---were they Visayans who were with you in the prison cell?

AB: Yeah, there were plenty of them but there was nobody that I really knew. I had no friends among them.

EG: When you moved to another plantation, to Lihue, what was your situation there? The salary was the same?

AB: Yes. I wasn't there too long and I became a contract boss. I had 24 people under me and I was the 25th. And I was watching over them.

EG: Maybe your salary also went up at that time?

AB: Oh, it was only \$5. It wasn't that it was \$5 a day, it was five more dollars every month, in addition to \$1 a day.

EG: Gee, that's not much of an improvement.

AB: Yeah, but the work wasn't so heavy. It was a matter of just walking around now. I could take it easy. I could stop at any time.

EG: Manong, when you were inside of the jail cell, was it forbidden to speak to one another?

AB: No.

EG: You could talk to one another?

AB: Yeah, sure.

EG: What would you talk about?

AB: Just talk among ourselves. Anything was our story. We had stories about anything.

EG: You didn't talk about the strike?

AB: No, we didn't. Maybe we said something like, "It's a good thing that we didn't meet up with a bullet, or we wouldn't be here now. We really were very lucky." If God decides that your time has come, it doesn't make any difference. You don't have to be on a battlefield. You could die anywhere. The time comes to die, you die. That's the kind of things we were talking about.

EG: Were there any of your companions who were sent back to the Philippines?

AB: No.

EG: Isn't it true that there were some of the strikers that they sent back to the Philippines?

AB: Yes, that's right. Like for instance, Evaristo. Bol-anon. There were three of them who were sent back to the Philippines. There was one of the three, who when he got back to the Philippines, caught cholera and died. But this Evaristo, I'm not sure if he's still alive or whether he's dead. But the police were very much afraid of him because he's the one who you couldn't wound. He had a special amulet. But that Evaristo, even before all of this, he was a very strong man. He was one of the champions in carrying sugar cane. When I was working, you could see him; he was the champion for carrying the most. He was really a big fellow. Very tall.

EG: Manong, did you ever hear the name of Pablo Manlapit?

AB: Yeah, I heard the name but I never saw.

EG: When you were inside of the jail, was there anybody who was an interpreter who went from Visayan to English?

AB: No.

EG: There must have been some of your companions who didn't know

English very well. Didn't they need an interpreter?

AB: No, but there was no interpreter. If you were here a little while in Hawaii, already you could get by in English. Of course, nobody spoke regular English. It was mixed with Filipino language, with Visayan.

EG: Were there any lawyers who came to visit you?

AB: I don't think so. I don't know, but no. Nobody asked us anything.

EG: There was no lawyer to help you?

AB: No.

EG: When you were inside of the jail, what were your activities? Was there things you did everyday, like for instance, have some exercise?

AB: Everyday we had some kind of exercise. When we left our cell we went outside. The kind of exercise that we had was we were sort of leaning over and pulling each other.

EG: When you went into the jail, did you see your wife, or where were they?

AB: They were right there inside of the strike hall.

EG: But there you were inside of the jail. When did you next see them?

AB: I didn't see them.

EG: Until you were released?

AB: Yeah, that's right.

EG: They didn't come to visit you?

AB: No.

EG: Weren't you worried about them?

AB: Why should I worry about them? They were there at the strike hall with a lot of other women and children.

EG: There in Koloa, in your own plantation, who was the person who convinced or got people enthusiastic about going out on strike?

AB: There was nobody actually there from the plantation itself. It was our neighbors who were saying, "If you don't join in the strike, they're going to kill you."

EG: Did your neighbor also go on strike?

AB: Of course he did.

EG: Your neighbor, was he a Filipino?

AB: Yes.

EG: Did he just arrive from the Philippines also?

AB: Yes.

EG: So the two of you were pretty much alike. Was he also married.

AB: Yes.

EG: Were there also strikers who had been here in Hawaii for quite a while?

AB: I don't know that.

EG: Why didn't you want to go back to Koloa?

AB: Ah, the work there at Koloa was very hard. There's an awful lot of stones. But some of the tools that you needed--like for instance, the file--they would allow you to use free. But if the file broke, then you had to pay for it.

EG: That's your reason for not wanting to go back to Koloa? Because the work was very hard?

AB: That's all there is to it. There were a lot of stones.

EG: You weren't afraid that because you had been out on strike maybe the company or the plantation would take its revenge on you for having been a striker?

AB: No, it had nothing at all to do with that. It was that matter, that there were too many stones in that place, and the work was very hard. I didn't want to go back to that.

EG: Manong, when you first came here to Hawaii, did you send money back for your family, for your parents?

AB: Yes, I did. But it was only a small amount.

EG: The union that you belonged to, is there a name to that group?

AB: I don't know, but I don't think there was.

EG: Were there some kind of dues or membership fees that you had to give for belonging to this group?

AB: None.

(EG explains to AB the procedure of making a transcript for him and then he can get someone to help him read over the transcript because we want to be sure that we didn't miss anything.)

AB: Today, the people who are working on the sugar plantations, they have quite a good salary. But with us before, we were only receiving \$1 a day. Our lives were very hard before, but now it's not so bad.

[EG: He has just lost his wife and apparently took it very hard, and is just coming out of it now. And I was just telling him that I would also pray for his wife.]

AB: You know, I didn't see my wife die. I didn't want to look at her at all. And also it's true of my child, also didn't want to be there when she died. We were the same, the two of us.

EG: Manong, are you a citizen of the United States?

AB: No, I'm not. I'm still a citizen of the Philippines.

EG: In your own family, how many are you; brothers and sisters?

AB: Three. One girl and two boys.

EG: How many are your own children?

AB: Four. Two boys, two girls.

EG: Do you know how to speak Tagalog?

AB: No, I don't.

EG: Yeah, me either.

AB: But I do know how to speak Ilocano. When I was there in Koloa, there were Ilocanos who were my companions. I used to carry a pencil and some paper, and I used to write down four or five different expressions every day. And before long, I could speak Ilocano. So now I know how to speak a little.

EG: What is the name of your mother?

AB: Barbara. Bakiano. My mother and father split up for awhile, and my mother went off to live with relatives, and my father went off to Davao. Marciano is the first name of my father.

EG: Did you go to school in the Philippines?

AB: I went a very short time, only until the second grade. My mother was living with one of our aunts. And then I was also sent to live with them. And I went from Cebu to Leyte. But when I got to Leyte, I didn't have time to go to school because I started working

for a rich family. It was through my cousin who was working for the rich family that I got this job. When I presented myself to the rich family, they looked at me and they said, "You're only a kid. How can you work?" We were given, at that time, 50 cents a day. And the food that you ate was free.

EG: Are you a Catholic?

AB: Yes, I am. This child of mine who was here, prays every night. [They have some kind of a special prayer there in the house. Probably has something to do with the death of the mother.]

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 5-44-3-78 TR

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Agapito Bakiano (AB)

December 7, 1978

Hanamaulu, Kauai

BY: Ed Gerlock (EG) and Chad Taniguchi (CT)

EG: This is Mr. Agapito Bakiano.

Manong, according to what you said before, you were married in Cebu, on a plantation. What were you doing on a plantation in Cebu?

AB: I wasn't working on a plantation in Cebu. I just got married there. There was a friend of mine, a kompadre who was connected with the plantation. And it seemed like a very nice place to get married. And so that's where I got married. There were a lot of people who got married at that plantation; it was a favorite spot. My friend was an interpreter and this plantation apparently was some kind of a---it had something to do with people who were laborers going to Hawaii.

EG: When he was accepted to come to Hawaii he was still an unmarried man. Before leaving for Hawaii he was married at the office or a plantation, or something that had something to do with bringing people here to Hawaii, a place. And so he came here as a married man.

How many were your brothers and sisters in your family?

AB: We were only three. Two boys and one girl.

EG: If you were only three, were your parents not worried about one of you going to Hawaii, since there were only three?

AB: No, they weren't worried about that at all.

EG: So they weren't too worried about you leaving for such a faraway place?

AB: No, they weren't.

EG: Were you given money at the time when you signed the contract to come to Hawaii?

AB: Yes we were.

EG: How much?

AB: We were given \$10 each. So because we were a married couple, \$20.

EG: What was that money for?

EG: I don't know what it was for but we had to get clothes and some other things for going to Hawaii. Everybody was given that amount.

EG: Manong, according to what you said before, there was a lot of fear on the part of the Visayans, at the time of the strike. That if they didn't join, something would happen to them. Like a threat.

AB: Yeah, that's true.

EG: How about the Ilocanos?

AB: No. Apparently there was no fear on the part of the Ilocanos. Because so few of them even considered joining the strike. They were together in not joining.

EG: Do you think the Ilocanos understood what the strike was all about?

AB: I don't know. I don't know if they understood it at all. There were only a very few Ilocanos who were included in the strike.

EG: Did anybody actually say that if you don't join the strike you will be killed?

AB: No, I never heard anybody say that. It was just something that was understood. Because there was an understanding among the people who were going out on strike. So we understood what they meant. There was a meeting in the very beginning, asking whether the Visayans wanted to go out on strike. And the majority did want to go out on strike. But there were a few who didn't raise their voices, didn't say anything one way or another. It was kind of understood that if the majority wanted to go they had to go also with them.

EG: [This is a long discussion about people who were in the strike camp who were going fishing. He seems to be saying:]

AB: It's not so much that people were assigned to go fishing to supply food for the strikers, but they were out there on their own trying to get fish. And if they were very lucky, naturally, a Visayan tradition, they would share whatever they had extra with the other strikers. But it's not so much that they were out fishing for the strikers, specifically.

There were also Japanese who were out there fishing. And some of the strikers would go out fishing with them. And naturally, the

way of payment many times was to share the fish that they caught. So these workers would then come back to the strike camp and share whatever fish had been shared with them [by the Japanese] with the strikers. Because it was the Japanese who had the large nets and were able to fish on a little bit larger scale than the ordinary fishermen.

EG: Did the Visayans ever borrow nets to go fishing for themselves?

AB: I don't know.

EG: Who did the cooking inside of the strike camp?

AB: Each group took care of itself. Like one family, or whatever unit you have there. A couple of young men living alone, or whatever it was; they cooked for themselves. There was no communal kitchen for everyone.

In the plantation, it often happened that there was only one cooking for everybody. But there at Hanapepe, everybody cooked for themselves. And sometimes the men would cook in the family, and sometimes the women. They were interchangeable.

EG: According to what you were saying before, as soon as the strike was over they raised the salary.

AB: No, I didn't say that. The salary before the strike was \$1 a day. And after the strike was broken--because it was unsuccessful--it remained at \$1 a day for quite a while.

EG: How long was it before the salary finally went up?

AB: I don't remember but it was a long time.

EG: Manong, you were saying in the last time that we interviewed you that your wife was teaching dancing there in the strike camp, and people paid for it.

AB: No, that's not correct. What would happen is there were some evenings when they would put on entertainment. The balitaw is a favorite Visayan dance. So they put on this dance in the evenings for entertainment and people appreciated it very much. They would throw money, which is kind of a Visayan custom also. So she was able to pick up some small amount of money. There was no large money involved. But it's not that she was teaching dancing, it's just people threw the money as an appreciation for the entertainment.

EG: After the strike was over, everybody went to jail?

AB: Yeah, that's right. We all went to jail except for the women.

EG: Manong, according to the last interview also, when all these

people were put in jail some were sent back to the Philippines.

AB: Yeah. Maybe that was two or three of the men that they knew were mischievous, maldito, people who were fooling around. They sent them back.

EG: How long was it after the incident in Hanapepe that they were sent back to the Philippines?

AB: I don't know. I don't know if it was right away or if there was a time that elapsed before they sent them back.

EG: Were they your companions there inside of the jail?

AB: Yes, they were. They just made a general announcement when I was there inside of the jail. That those who wanted to go back to work in the plantations could go back immediately. And myself, I just wanted to get back to work and forget the whole thing. So I went back.

There's a policeman by the name of Zacarias who was in the plantation of Hanamaulu, where I was working before. He asked me specifically, "Do you want to go back?"

And I said, "Yeah."

And he said, "Okay." I went to ride on the truck immediately. I just left my companions back there in the jail. I don't know what happened to them. Maybe some of them were shipped back to the Philippines. I don't know.

EG: Were there no companions that went with you back to the plantation?

AB: No. I was alone when I came back. Others, I think, went back to their own plantations.

EG: How many days were you there inside the jail?

AB: I myself, I was in for 15 days. Two weeks.

EG: Were there any lawyers or judges or anybody who asked you about what had happened?

AB: No. Only the police came to ask us questions. As I explained to you before, the police stood outside and they lined up and we walked between them, and they were picking out who had been there at Hanapepe and who wasn't. Now, maybe there were lawyers standing there among them. I don't know. One at a time, we had to walk between the lines. And they would say something like, "This one, he was there; that one wasn't there."

So maybe it wasn't actually if you were there when the incident

happened, or not, but if you were involved in the fight that they were saying, "Yes, he was there." In other words, there in the shooting itself or not present at the shooting. After that happened, that's when I got the offer to go back to work on the plantation. I was released immediately.

EG: Were there different cells there in the jail, for those who had committed big crimes and those who had committed little crimes, in their estimation.

AB: Yeah, those who had committed big crimes in their [police] estimation, the doors had big holes in them. So there were plenty of mosquitos inside of that room. Whereas, those who had committed small crimes, their rooms were fairly comfortable and there weren't many mosquitos in there.

EG: What do you mean by "big crimes," and "small crimes?" What is the big crime?

AB: Big crime is those who were involved in the fight, in the killing. They knew who they were. Those who were able to kill somebody. Those who they knew that didn't kill anybody or were not so much involved in the fight at all, they were put into a closed room. A room that the mosquitos couldn't get in to. A room with slightly better conditions.

EG: How about yourself?

AB: Well, I guess we were people involved in small crimes, or no crimes at all. Because I was in the room that was closed. Our toilet was right there in the room. It was just a plain can. It was okay during the day because you could go outside to the toilet. But during the night or evenings or early morning, then you had go inside using that can. It was kind of a closeted space. If you spent a long time in there, people began pounding on the doors. Same thing when you were eating. There would be police who would be marching back and forth behind you. There were some of the prisoners who were unable to eat because of fear of these guards walking back and forth behind you.

EG: Why were they so afraid?

AB: I don't know. But these, they were afraid because of these big guards who were walking back and forth behind 'em.

EG: Were the police mischievous? Would they push people around, something like that?

AB: I don't know. I never saw anything like that. It was just their size and the fear on the part of the prisoners that made it difficult for them to eat. There are others who are just fearful, I guess.

EG: These people that you're talking about, was that the National Guard?

AB: I don't know what they were.

EG: How about their uniform; what did their uniform look like?

AB: Their uniform was not the kind that they have at the police---they were khaki colored uniforms, so therefore, they were some kind of National Guard or military.

EG: That prison that you were in, what kind of a prison was that?

AB: The rooms were very small.

EG: Yeah, but I mean where was the place?

AB: It was here in Nawiliwili. It's not there anymore. There were only 12 cells in it, and sometimes they had as many as 12 people inside of each one.

And when the sheriff came and he looked at it, and how crowded the conditions were, he said, "This isn't very good. There will be many who will die inside of a prison like this." When he came back the next morning, he brought carpenters with him. So they made some new rooms, new cells for the prisoners. And then we had a choice. Those who wanted to go out and go into the new rooms could. Some wanted to change and some didn't.

EG: Manong, when the trouble began there in Hanapepe, where were the women and the children?

AB: They were there inside of the hall.

EG: They weren't outside at all?

AB: No....well, you know, there probably were some women and children who were also standing outside.

EG: But when the actual shooting started do you think that all the women and children were inside?

AB: Oh sure. Once it started. Because there was no shooting going on in the hall itself. I'm sure they ran inside for protection.

EG: And how about your wife?

AB: Yeah, she was inside the hall also.

EG: Did she have children at that time?

AB: Yeah, she had only one. And the child was still small.

EG: [This is an attempt on my part to try and run through the events as they happened, trying to find out whether the police and the sheriff really had the intention of breaking the strike by killing some of the strikers. But his answer to this is:]

AB: That's possible that they had the intention of killing the strikers right from the beginning, but I don't know that because I was in the banana patch. And when I heard the shooting start, of course I didn't want to go out on the road and get killed myself. And so, I just know that they got the two Ilocanos, that they ran out with them, that the strikers followed them and the shooting started. I don't think I know anymore than you do about that.

EG: [I asked Mr. Bakiano if he knows Sulpicio Venyan, who was also in the banana patch and also in jail. But he doesn't know him.]

It's surprising to me how little they know each other. I'm surprised that they don't know each other very much.

AB's daughter: But I'm pretty sure they have some....because my mother was saying that they know mostly the Visayans. They know one another because most of them came together. And they all used to settle in one area, the Visayans and the Ilocanos. You try ask him intermarriage, Visayan and Ilocano; no more.

EG: Before?

AB's daughter: Yeah.

EG: What now?

AB's daughter: Now, it's all right, but before, I remember. You try ask him. No intermarriage between Visayan and Ilocano.

EG: Very bad, eh?

AB's daughter: Uh huh. They used to have one camp, only the Visayan. When I was a little girl. And Ilocanos all on one side. But although we lived with Ilocanos. Our neighbor was Ilocano and the other one was Japanese. Papa can talk good Ilocano, you know.

No, Pa? Ilocano?

AB: I can speak Ilocano, but there's very few Ilocanos who can speak Visayan. When I worked at Koloa, I used to take a pencil and paper and copy down words in Ilocano so I could learn the language. Every day I'd learn five new words. After a short time, I had a lot of words.

My work before was counting lines. It was very difficult work because you had to do it very early in the morning and you'd get quite wet from the dew. I didn't like that work very much, and so I asked for a transfer to another type of work.

It was a good thing the shooting was a distance from the hall. Because if it had happened near the hall there would have been a lot of women and children who would have died. When they arrived at the place where there is the mangoes, that's when the shooting started. The Filipinos who had pistols were the ones who died because that's what made them feel very courageous, the fact that they had a pistol. Anybody who had a pistol was willing to fight back. And that's how they died.

EG: Were there many Filipinos who had pistols?

AB: Oh yeah, there were a lot before. They were hiding them all over the place.

AB's daughter: They were stolen?

AB: No, they were able to buy them outside.

EG: They had bullets too?

AB: Well, some did and some didn't. And some had only had one bullet. What good is a gun if it doesn't have bullets?

AB's daughter: Who the big boss? Who the one tell for go strike? Visayan or Ilocano?

AB: Tagalog.

EG: Manlapit?

AB: Manlapit, oh, Manlapit. I don't know if he's alive or dead.

EG: He's dead now. He died there in the Philippines. Did you ever see him?

AB: No.

EG: [We have heard that he spoke in Tagalog and English.]

AB: It's very difficult to be a new sakada--a new sugar worker--coming from the Philippines. Because even though you don't understand, you're agreeable to everything.

EG: Is that the way that it was, that they were new sakadas and so they didn't understand?

AB: Yeah, that's right. They didn't understand anything. I myself, I didn't understand.

EG: So why did you go along?

AB: Well, because that seemed like the best thing to do. We were all Visayans.

AB's daughter: My mother's cousin, too; they didn't go to Hanapepe. They stayed back in Koloa. Camarillo. Ramon Camarillo, the wife is a cousin to my mother. He's about two years older than my father.

EG: [I'm trying to ask him about these organizations in the Philippines, semi-religious, semi-political; for example, the "Sakdalista". Because they're all over the country and exist up until the present time.]

I was wondering, while you were still in the Philippines did you ever have any contact with a group like that?

AB: I don't know anything about it. While I was there in the Philippines, even when I was still a young child, I was living with a fairly wealthy family, and so we had almost no contact with people like that. My work there was cutting the grass or weeding the tobacco fields. I was still a child and they were giving 50 cents a day for other laborers. And since I was only a child, they were going to give me 10 cents a day. So I was out there working in the tobacco fields, and working alongside of me was the wife of the owner, the senyora. She's telling me to pull out the weeds completely, with the roots and all, because if I don't do that then the weeds won't die.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

EG: [Mr. Bakiano is telling the story about how he was working in the tobacco fields back there in the Philippines when he was still a child. And he was working alongside the wife of the owner, the senyora. So later on, when the husband came by and saw him working, he said, "What is this child doing working in my tobacco fields?"

And the wife answered him back and said, "This young boy should be paid as much as the other laborers. He should be paid 50 cents a day also because he works as hard as they do, if not harder."]

AB: Because they were big people also, including the wife of the owner, that they would take some of the tobacco and they would stop to smoke every once in a while also. But me, because I was still a child, wasn't smoking. And so actually, I was working faster than they would. I'd be all the way down the row of weeding, and they would still be half way. So my salary got to be the same as big people's salary.

EG: How old were you at that time?

AB: Twelve years old.

Before I went to Leyte, back in our town in Cebu, the town of Argao, I also went to school. We had a barrio school there. I went to school only up to the second grade. But I already knew how to read and write in the second grade. When I went to Leyte to begin working in those tobacco fields, of course I didn't go to school anymore. So I went to school just enough to be able to know how to write and to read.

EG: When you first arrived here, you were assigned to Koloa, to the plantation. What was your life like there?

AB: Our salary was only \$1 a day, and so we had to be very thrifty and careful with our money.

EG: When you heard about the strike what were they asking for? Were there other things besides the raise in salary?

AB: No, it was just that we heard that we could double the amount of money that we were making in one day. So naturally, we were interested in that.

EG: Were there any other demands that they were asking for?

AB: I don't know.

EG: On your plantation, how many were you that went out on strike?

AB: Oh, we were plenty.

AB's daughter: Pa, all Visaya, go?

AB: Yeah. You know how it was before, there were an awful lot of Visayans in, like for instance, Cebu. And there was not enough work for everybody. That's why, the first groups to come over were Visayan. There was so much unemployment. The first groups were all Visayan.

EG: Manong, do you think that it was very difficult to be accepted to come to Hawaii to work on the plantations; or was it just very easy and they were looking for people?

AB: Well, if you didn't know an agent who was looking for people, it was very difficult. You really had to come into contact with one of those agents. But of course, those agents were also receiving some kind of a commission for the people that they convinced. So if you knew an agent it was easy.

EG: Were there many who wanted to come here to Hawaii?

AB: Yes, there were. There were many. One thing that made a big difference was the people who came home after working there in Hawaii. They would come home with beautiful clothes and with gold money and all kinds of jewelry, and things like that. And so that

right away made others want to come here to Hawaii to work.

EG: But you yourself, you were accepted right away to come here?

AB: Yes, I was. Mostly, it was unmarried men who came.

EG: [There's a discussion going on now. Since most of the people who came here to Hawaii from the Philippines were men, there were so many more men than women. So very few of the Filipinos were married. So the opportunity for getting married was not present for a large number of Filipinos.]

AB: Sometimes, there was a little bit of conflict or difference between---there was some wife stealing that went on. There were others who left behind their wives, there in the Philippines, and came here as unmarried men. Then after they worked here for three years, they went back home again.

My wife [who just died] went back to the Philippines twice, and to the Mainland once. But myself, I have not left Hawaii since I arrived.

AB's daughter: He's afraid.

AB: I'm also sickly.

EG: There was a strike in 1946, Manong. Were you also included in that?

AB: Oh yeah. I think everybody in Hawaii was included in that strike. Whether you wanted to strike or didn't want to strike didn't make any difference because even if you wanted to work, you wouldn't be given work.

EG: What kind of work were you doing at the time of the strike in 1946?

AB: I was a kapatas. Kapatas in Hawaiian can be translated as contract boss. I had 20 men under me. I received five more dollars every month than everybody else because of my position. They were receiving \$1 a day.

EG: Were you a member of the union, ILWU?

AB: Yes.

EG: What was the result of that strike?

AB: Well, we won that one.

EG: Now you have been in two strikes; 1924 and 1946. How do you compare the two strikes? What's the difference between them?

AB: The strikes are the same. A strike is a strike. But the dif-

ference was, in 1946, I didn't go to eat at any kind of a union hall or something like that. I used to just come home and eat. But in 1924, we were all together in a strike camp. We were all together in one place.

I wanted to work in 1946 but they wouldn't give me any work to do.

EG: Is there any other difference?

AB: No, I don't think so. One other possible difference is that in 1946, we won. In 1924, we lost.

In 1924, when the strike first started, those who were willing to go out on strike, the people who were sort of carrying the strike, they had a truck. And you just put your things on the truck and off you went, all together, to the strike camp.

EG: Nobody warned you about not joining in the strike because something might happen?

AB: No. No one said anything to us about it. If you were in the strike camp and you were walking around the town, how working or anything, people assumed that you were a striker. And sometimes, the police would ask you for your number. So even though there wasn't a strike going on, if you were just walking around, not doing anything, either inside the plantation or outside, and you met the plantation police, they could legitimately ask you what your number was. If they knew that you were a striker, of course you couldn't be living on the plantation anymore.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 5-1-1-78

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mr. Agapito Bakiano (AB)

March 7, 1978

Hanamaulu, Kauai

BY: Gael Gouveia (GG), Chad Taniguchi(CT),
and Yoshikazu Morimoto (YM)

YM: How many day you stay calaboose?

AB: I think 15 days, though.

YM: You go korokoro?

AB: Yeah, korokoro.

YM: The time korokoro the men, he not get release, suppose pau? No?

AB: No. No release. Go back calaboose.

CT: What is korokoro?

AB: Court.

CT: In the calaboose, what you eat?

AB: Rice and that bakalau before. Bakalau.

GG: How big was the room you stayed in?

AB: Small room, eh, because only 10 number.

YM: Ten feet, eh?

AB: Ten feet. Ten men inside.

CT: So where you sleep?

AB: Only sit down. No can lay down all same because too much men, eh?

CT: Whole day you stay in there?

AB: Yeah, whole day. But morning time, we kaukau rice, exercise.

But wen kaukau time, eh, watch out, the policeman behind. Some [men] no can eat, scared.

CT: How many time you eat one day?

AB: Three. Morning time, coffee. Nighttime and afternoon.

YM: That time, you boy [son] how old? One year?

AB: Ah, maybe two year. Two year, I think. Yeah, two year. He was walking around little bit. About three year or two year; 1922, he born. Yeah, two year already. He go holoholo.

YM: He [son] retire too, eh, now? He retire police?

AB: Yeah, retire. But he work airport. I tell him, "What's a matter, you; you retire police and then you work over there?"

Yeah, I make money, eh?"

No more [Social] Security yet. Bumbai, come 62, all right, collect Security.

CT: You remember in the calaboose, what time you eat breakfast?

AB: I don't know that. We no more watch, eh.

CT: What kind exercise you do in the morning?

AB: Huki huki. Because somebody in the back.

CT: What kind that?

AB: Hana pa'a over there the back, eh, We make huki and sometime rope. huki rope.

CT: Oh. [Something like tug of war, either with rope or by holding on to each other's body.]

AB: But some strong men, eh. Big bugga, ah, they win.

GG: What did you do the rest of the day, then; after you come back from exercise, what do you do?

AB: Sit down inside the room. Yeah.

GG: Talk story?

AB: Yeah.

CT: Who huki huki with who?

AB: Two side, eh, that one. Make by line. I don't know who that guy, I don't know.

YM: And the strike boss no stay with you fella?

AB: No more.

YM: No more?

AB: No more. I don't know, sometime. But I no look [I didn't see them]. Yeah, I no look.

YM: That time, Hanapepe, who the boss? Your strike man?

AB: The inside, the hall.

YM: Hanapepe get boss, eh? For the strike.

AB: The hall?

YM: No, the man, the boss. The leader.

AB: In Hanapepe?

YM: I forget the name. Foreget already. Me no can remember the name.

CT: You remember from where the man?

AB: I don't know, that one.

CT: Koloa man?

AB: No, I don't know. I don't know from where.

YM: Manlapit no come one time?

AB: No, I no look.

I look one time before, he making the [speech in] Lihue, eh?
He come by the road, I no go. Because no more car, eh, holoholo.
I live Camp 9, too much far. Ah, I no care.

CT: Camp 9 is...

AB: Hanamaulu. Pau, finish the strike already [he saw Manlapit after the strike], the time.

The time I been inside calaboose, yet, eh. This Lihue policeman come, this man come, this Carias, police, eh, plantation police.

CT: Carias?

AB: Carias. Police, eh, that one. Plantation. Two guy, and Amarin,

He tell, "Who like go back plantation? Suppose you fella like go back plantation, now can go back."

I tell him, "Yeah, me, I like go back plantation, but I no like go back Koloa. Hard time over there, Koloa. Plenty stone. Hard time to kalai. I like, I go Lihue."

He tell, "Okay." After, he bring me here, Lihue.

Some no like. "Ah, stay there calaboose, yet." Yeah. (Laughs)

YM: So Carias and Amarin, he go jail talk to you fella?

AB: Yeah.

YM: They go Waimea jail talk?

AB: Talk, yeah.

But now, Carias make already, and Amarin.

YM: Yeah, Amarin.

That time, Koloa, Gabino policeman, too? Gabino?

AB: Yeah, Gabino.

YM: Yeah?

CT: He make?

YM: He died already.

AB: Make. That's the time, him policeman, strike time.

YM: Long time policeman, eh?

AB: I think so. Long time. Because he go home Philippine Island, eh, the time.

YM: But he make here.

AB: Yeah, he make here. Only vacation, eh, Philippine Island, and he come back.

CT: In the calaboose, how you sit down? In the calaboose only sit down, on the floor?

AB: Yeah, on the floor. But that time, only, [after the police] he make bug house already, eh, only three men inside. Then you can sleep good. Yeah. About three days, I think, the time. Three days or two days that, only sit down.

AB: Yeah. Pilikia, though. Bumbai, Mr. Rice come, morning time. He look, he tell, "That's no good, this one. Bumbai plenty man make. Make house right away, eh." He go home. Come the carpenter, he make quick.

CT: Oh, they built them right then?

AB: Yeah, Yeah, then. He tell, "No good, this one." Plenty men inside. Only one room. Ten men only, only sit down.

GG: And then did they take you to trial at Waimea?

AB: Huh?

YM: Korokoro, Waimea?

AB: No, Lihue.

CT: You went to court?

AB: Yeah. All calaboose men, all bring to the courthouse.

GG: And what happened at the courthouse?

AB: Nothing. Bumbai pau korokoro, go back calaboose.

YM: That time, you fella had abogado [lawyer]?

AB: No more. No more lawyer, no more abogado.

(Laughter)

CT: No more lawyer?

AB: No more.

CT: You never talk in the court?

AB: No, no talk. Only the time he remember the men, pass [through the line of policemen]. No talk nothing. Me the last one, I think.

"Ah, this man got?"

"Ah, no."

Bumbai, the last one policemen, he tell, "Ah, got. This one is strike man." But I don't know what happen, he come out, this one, come inside, "This one is strike man. Suppose not strike man, eh, he no come, go inside." He know, get trouble, eh. That's why, he tell, "Ah, this one is strike man."

CT: What is that, when you say, "This one got, this one...?"

AB: When you pass, eh, bumbai the policeman look one by one, "This man got?" That the one he remember he was [a strike participant].

"Yeah, yeah."

Bumbai, all got, got. Bumbai, then me the last one. I tell, "No."

Bumbai, one man, one policeman say, "Ah, got. Because he come inside the hall, that's pororoi striker, eh? Come inside, eh."

YM: He tell if suppose you strike man or no strike man?

AB: No, he no tell. He say, "Ah, this one is strike man. Because he come inside the hall."

CT: You remember the policeman name?

AB: Me, I don't know. Me, I no can remember. No sabe.

GG: And how long before they let you go, then?

AB: About 15 days. The one, he fight, eh, then he live over there, calaboose. He no can go outside.

GG: And then you went back to the plantation when they let you out?

AB: Yeah.

GG: And you went back to work?

AB: Yeah.

YM: Must be that time you tell you like go work; that's why they make you go out, eh?

AB: I think so, yeah. But I tell him, "Ah, I no like go back Koloa. I like go Lihue."

YM: The one no like work struck there yet.

AB: Stuck, yeah, yeah.

GG: You had family already that time, or you were single man?

AB: Yeah, family, get family. From Philippine Island.

CT: That one [referring to Mrs. Bakiano]?

AB: Yeah, this one.

GG: And where did she stay or what happened to here while you were in the calaboose?

YM: The time you stay calaboose, she stay up Hanapepe?

AB: Yeah, she stay up at the hall, give kaukau. All the ladies stay up there.

YM: And that time, only our boy, one boy?

AB: Only one. This number one boy.

CT: Who give the kaukau?

AB: The strike...

YM: Strike committee. Yeah.

CT: No, but after you in the calaboose, who give the kaukau.

AB: After I work, I come here work. That's why I can buy kaukau.

CT: No, you in the calaboose in Waimea.

AB: No, not there, Lihue. I calaboose Lihue, calaboose not Waimea. All bring over there. Only the make one Waimea calaboose. And then, hemo the clothes and bring the clothes in the calaboose, Lihue calaboose. He tell, This clothes, you fella know who belong this one?"

"Ai, no." Nobody know, eh, because only clothes, eh?

CT: The make man clothes, they bring?

AB: Yeah, bring 'em. They put 'em inside the calaboose. They tell, "Ah, you know this man, who belong this clothes?"

"I don't know. No sabe, only clothes."

CT: Why they like do that?

AB: I don't know. Make already, eh, over there. The clothes in the calaboose yet, too.

CT: Same day or next day?

AB: I don't know. Not that same day; about three days, I think. Because the make men inside there, at calaboose, eh, Waimea. They hemo the clothes. But I don't know because the clothes come here, Lihue. Hemo, I think that right away, eh?

YM: About how many strike men make, that time.

AB: I hear 16. I don't know, I no count. Only I hear the story; 16.

YM: How much policemen make?

AB: He said six. Little bit.

YM: Because the strike men no more pistol, eh?

AB: No more. Some got pistol but only one bullet, two.

YM: Yeah. Not too much shot.

AB: No, no smart shoot. Shoot one time, pau, no more bullet already.

YM: Some policeman make just like that, like cut cane [makes swinging motion with right hand], eh?

AB: Cut cane.

(Laughter)

GG: Who provided the food for your wife and your baby while you were in the calaboose?

YM: Who give kaukau?

AB: The strike there, Hanapepe.

CT: The strike men or the policemen give the kaukau?

YM: The strike committee, eh?

AB: Yeah, the strike committee.

GG: But the strike committee wasn't all in the jail?

YM: No, I think some were not involved.

AB: I don't know. Ah, yeah, some inside jail, eh, the strike committee?

YM: Yeah, yeah.

AB: But I don't know who give the kaukau, though.

CT: After you go work Lihue Plantation, that day, where your wife was? The day you come out from calaboose, where your wife?

AB: Follow me, eh?

CT: She no stay in Hanapepe?

AB: I take 'em from Hanapepe. With truck, plantation truck.

CT: Oh. What happened that day, the day you come out from calaboose? What happened?

- AB: Nothing. Go take Hanapepe, eh, I go take my wife and everything.
- YM: The time Amarin tell you, suppose you got that job, you go Hanapepe hapai the asawa [wife].
- AB: Yeah.
- YM: The plantation representative went to court. And since he [Bakiano] said he wanted to work, they went to pick up his wife.
- AB: Yeah.
- GG: The wives could ever come to visit the men during that 15 days when they were in jail?
- AB: No.
- YM: That time you stay up jail, asawa no can come?
- AB: No can. I don't know. My asawa no come. I no look wahine there.
- YM: No more car, eh?
- AB: No more.
- YM: No way of transportation.
- GG: Did anybody else's wife come?
- AB: I don't know, I no look. No more, I think. But wife no look.
- CT: In the calaboose, how many men all together?
- AB: I don't know, I no can count, I no can remember.
- YM: Must have been big pile, eh? Plenty, eh?
- AB: Yeah, plenty. All pile down there. All inside calaboose. So long strikers, all pile down there.
- CT: You think may be 50, 100?
- AB: I don't know how much. I don't know yet all how much strikers over there.
- GG: How did they bring them from Hanapepe to Lihue? How did you get...
- YM: For korokoro....(inaudible).... they give bus?
- AB: Yeah. But or....I forget already.
- GG: Plantation truck?

AB: Plantation, I think, that time. In truck, eh, plantation truck, I think, that time.

GG: And how many men they put inside one time? They crowd up the whole truck to bring you down?

AB: Yeah, I don't know how many men inside.

CT: How come you go strike?

AB: Ah, new man, eh? That's why you scared, eh. Somebody said, my neighbor tell, "Suppose you no go follow strike. Bumbai, nighttime, he come kill you." I new man [new worker] time, I scared, eh? And then I go.

Morning time, that time, plantation police come holoholo, in the camp. He tell, "What's matter? Why you no go work?"

"Ah, I no like work."

"All right. Hapai you maleta [luggage] inside the road."

Ride the strikers, one truck, though, pick up. All pick up, pile on the road. Go bring Hanapepe.

CT: How come you new man, you was in Hawaii three years already.

AB: Yeah, just all same new man, eh. I don't know that one. No more friend yet.

CT: Your neighbor said somebody going kill you if you no strike?

AB: Ah, that striker, too, that one. The one, he like go, eh, strike. That's the one, he tell me. But I don't know the name.

YM: Had one in Lihue. I heard he was so scared, he go up mountain, eh. Lihue get one mountain man, eh?

AB: I don't know. (Laughs)

YM: Yeah, one guy, that's the one. Till few years back he was living up the mountain.

CT: When was that? When he went up?

YM: During the strike.

CT: 1924 strike?

YM: Yeah. This one Visaya too, eh, the one go mountain, mountain man?

AB: I don't know. I never hear that.

CT: He still around or what?

YM: I think he died already. Was long time ago, eh.

Before, Iske used to work with him. You know, you sabe Iske?

AB: Iske, I don't know.

YM: The Japon, Lihue, smart talk Visayan? The one he work make ditch.

AB: I don't know. The Lihue side, I don't know.

YM: That guy used to live up in the mountain.

CT: His wife [AB's wife], you think we can talk to the wife maybe tomorrow or something. I know you no pau kaukau yet, eh.

AB: Ah, no pilikia.

CT: Maybe tomorrow or next day.

AB: That one, he no can hear good, though. No can hear good.

CT: But can hear?

AB: Can hear, though, you make strong talk. Is old already; is 83 old. Me 70....she more old than me. but she get the strong yet.

CT: You marry in Hawaii?

AB: No, Philippine Island, yeah, come together.

YM: Cebu?

AB: Cebu.

CT: When you was working for Koloa, how much they pay you one day?

AB: One dollar. Because I count the line, no kalai. Because the luna is Visaya; me all same, Visaya, too. He tell, "Ah, you count the line." But morning time, ah, no good, though. Wet the clothes. You go row, row, eh, count the line.

CT: When you strike, how much money you wanted?

AB: Two dollar. Yeah, \$2. But I no hear the meeting yet. Only talk, talk, talk, talk. I scared, eh; suppose you go no, bumbai he come kill you. Because I scared, I new man, eh.

GG: Did they try to scare many people into joining the strike?

AB: Suppose me sabe that one the time yet, I no go. But new man time, ah, quick scared.

YM: Easy, eh?

AB: Yeah.

CT: What about your wife, what she said? Your wife scared, too?

AB: Yeah, scared too, eh. But he no tell me for go. Only I tell us go follow. That's the one.

CT: That Koloa Plantation Filipino men, everybody go?

AB: No, some not go. Only Visaya go. Some no go, Visaya, too. Ilocano, one no more.

CT: No more Ilocano?

AB: No more.

CT: How come?

AB: I don't know. He no like, eh, I think.

YM: Language barrier, eh.

CT: Your wife Visaya, too?

AB: Visaya, yeah.

CT: Okay, thank you.

YM: You like talk to the wife? Might as well.

If she's up.

AB: I don't know. Hard time for talk, that one. No can hear.

CT: Bumbai I tape. When get more time.

Okay, thank you. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

The 1924 Filipino Strike on Kauai

Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**Ethnic Studies Program
University of Hawaii, Manoa**

June 1979